

JOHN

Current Issue

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Welcome to JOHN

This is the first issue that will set the stage for the sharing of a story of discovery or the promise of some visual attraction from my camera lens.

Featured are three exciting events that while varied in subject are full of subject matter that will surely hold the attention.

First the story of the curfew bell in Fayetteville, N.C. The story or legend if you will has several versions.

Second is the story of one, Hannah Simpson Spencer. Someone who took the time to make a difference in the community in which she lived and to help others as much as she could during her entire lifetime.

With March being Women in History month, it serves us well to remember Mariette Holley. She was an author whose writings share themes of prohibition and women's rights. She was held in high regard by her famous friends that included Susan B. Anthony, Clara Barton and Frances Willard.

Marietta Holley is remembered as one of America's most significant early female humorists.

We end with what will be a regular feature that is called Fresh Flowers. Each flower or grouping of flowers will highlight or enhance a story.

JAH

Sound the curfew

Fayetteville lacked the railroad connections that powered growth after the war. Things got so bad, the town was unable to pay its bills and in 1881 turned in its charter to the sheriff. The town government didn't function for years. You can imagine the wounded pride felt around town. Everything that had seemed solid had shifted, crumbled, faded away.

But one thing that didn't change: The Market House bell kept ringing, right up into the night. The Observer, which resumed publication in 1883, made matter-of-fact mention of this custom in 1894.

"We notice with much amusement that many of the large northern and western dailies and quite a number of southern newspapers continue to tell the tale of Fayetteville's now famous 'curfew bell.' We took occasion some time back to correct this error on the part of strangers who invariably think that the ringing of the town hall bell at 9 o'clock at night is the continuance of the old Norman custom of ringing the curfew, which in those days was a warning to the people of England to put their lights out and retire, whereas, in fact it is but the continuance of the old ante-bellum patrol, which required all the slaves to retire to their quarters."

This was 29 years after the war. Then another 44 years later - even after the Market House had dodged a close call or two with the wrecking ball, and 20 years after the U.S. Army had established Fort Bragg outside town - it was the same old tune downtown.

"In keeping with the traditions of the old Market House, an early custom is still practiced," the Observer reported in 1938. "Daily the bell in steeple rings, breakfast 7:30 o'clock, dinner 1 o'clock, and sundown bell. Nine o'clock still rings, which was the curfew, when all slaves must be in their quarters."

The newspaper article below was in a Holy Bible owned by Maria Coffing Holley Rudd who was the wife of William Beardslee Rudd, co-owner of the Holley Knife Factory in Lakeville, CT. This bible was purchased at an estate sale in Lakeville, after the death of the last Rudd living there. JAH

Where the curfew bell still rings

(From a St. Louis Exchange - 1890)

"The curfew is still rung in Fayetteville, N. C." said E. B. Bonner. "notwithstanding the abolition by statute in the sixteenth century of the custom of ringing the curfew in England, this American town has kept it up for nearly two centuries, or since it was first settled. The custom has here very nearly its ancient significance--ordering the people to put out the fires on the hearths and remain indoors for the night. Fayetteville has been the same quiet, peaceful village that it is now very since the Revolutionary War, when for a brief season it was an active, bustling military town, the centre of those operations which made the names of King's Mountain, Cowpens and Guilford Church historical. Every evening curfew ushers in the night and bids farewell to the day that is done, and seldom are people seen upon the streets after its sound has ceased. It has never missed a night during the last century, and there is no disposition to abolish it. It has also a town crier, but in this it is not alone, Columbia, S. C., keeping up that custom, which I believe has fallen into disuse elsewhere."



Hannah Simpson Spencer

EVENING The Tribune

‘A lady ahead of her time’

JASPER — A long lost obituary tucked away in a family Bible became a source of inspiration for women from Jasper, New York to New Mexico over the last year. Hannah Simpson Spencer, of Jasper had a lasting impact on her community that once was lost, but has been found again thanks to the dedicated work of a trans-national network of researchers. The history first came to light in the 1980s, when the mother of Christine Holley, of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, began researching the family’s genealogy. “She would share with me, and I was not interested,” she recalled. Holley picked up the deeply personal hobby in 2011 following her mother’s death, and ran with it. “There was a copy of the obituary, and she had written on it ‘Yes!, Yes!, a lady ahead of her time!’” She went on to discover an impressive list of accomplishments Spencer racked up in her lifetime. She was one of the first female graduates from Alfred University in 1863; she went on to earn a license to practice medicine from the N.Y. Eye & Ear Infirmary (Mt Sinai). A diary Spencer kept in her time at Alfred University is now a part of the library’s collection. “I tore through that, and got to know her even better,” Holley said. “Things really started developing from there.” Spencer came from a long line of people who shaped history and their communities. Her father was a store and temperance hotel owner, and her grandfather was a Revolutionary War veteran who helped found the first Masonic Lodge in Hornell. On top of her tireless work to further her education, Spencer raised six children. After her children were grown, she would open a sanatorium in Jasper, using electricity, baths and rest to help people recover from illness and stress. Spencer was the president of the Jasper Women Christian Temperance Union for 20 years, a member of the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Canisteo River Baptist Association for 28 years, and a Girl Scout leader at the age of 70, according to her 1929 obituary. Spencer’s former home, a modest dwelling where she did so much to help her community, still stands in Jasper.



Hannah Simpson Spencer was presented The DAR Women in American History Award in March of 2016 by the Kanestio Valley Chapter of the DAR, Bath, New York.

Her lifetime of accomplishments pushed Holley to inquire about nominating Spencer for a Daughters of the American Revolution Women in American History Award. However, nominators had to reside in the same state as the subject. "I was just devastated, because I just knew Hannah would win this," she said. Holley asked the Canisteo Valley chapter to take up Spencer's cause. They were honored to do so, and in March 2016, Hannah received some much deserved recognition. "It grew and grew into this amazing event where I flew out there, people flew out from other states, Daughters from Rochester came down, and three of Hannah's great-grandsons came from out of state, and I put on a presentation about Hannah and was presented the award," she said. Each fall, the Steuben County Historian's Office takes nominations for the county's Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was founded in 1976, and has honored people like Spencer ever since. This year, Spencer was a nominee. Holley swelled with pride at the news that the legislature recently approved the nomination this week "I'm extremely proud because of the time frame and the accomplishments she made ... she was such an outstanding lady for the time," she said. "She didn't take all this knowledge and just decided to raise as family. She served her community well into her 70s, accomplishing everything she set out to accomplish." A line from her obituary summed Spencer up well. "She was a mother of Israel, a woman of great ability and the highest character, and her works do follow her." They will follow her into the Hall of Fame, where she will take her place alongside 130 other members. A banquet to honor nominees will take place in Bath at a future date.

By Jason Jordan
The Evening Tribune

Marietta Holley: The North Country's Answer to the Women Question

Very pleased to hear that the Jefferson County Historical Society will mark the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in NYS with the exhibit featuring Marietta Holley and others who used their talents to highlight gender inequalities. Over the last few years, I have come to know Marietta Holley through her many books and my tireless research into the Holley ancestry. My first encounter with "Josiah Allen's Wife" occurred at a yard sale in Johnson City, NY. The bag of books I bought contained "Samantha at Saratoga". This discovery of a possible relative started a journey that is probably in my eyes just as long as Samantha's journey through some 21 books "episodin' and allegorin'" in dealing with the issues personal and political that occupied the thinkers of the age. JAH



Marietta Holley (16 July 1836 – 1 March 1926), was an American humorist who used satire to comment on U.S. society and politics. Holley's writing was frequently compared to that of Mark Twain and Edgar Nye.

Holley was the youngest of Mary Tabor and John Milton's seven children. The family lived on a small farm in Jefferson County, New York.^[1] At 14 she ended her formal education in order to supplement the family income by giving piano lessons. At 17 she converted to the Baptist faith and joined the Adams Village Baptist Church. Her father died when she was 25, and Holley took charge of the farm and care of her sick mother and sister. After she became a successful novelist, she built a mansion called "Bonnie View" near her family's home in Pierrepont. Holley never married. She died in 1926 at age 89.

Holley enjoyed a prolific writing career and was a bestselling author in the late 19th century, though she was largely forgotten by the time of her death. Her first poems were published locally in the *Adams Journal*, which led to successes in more prominent periodicals such as *Peterson's Magazine*. In 1872, her first novel, *My Opinions and Betsey Bobbet's*, was released by the American Publishing Company. She wrote over 25 books, including one collection of poems, two dramas and one long poem, between 1873 and 1914. Among her novels was a 10-book series that detailed the travels and married life of Samantha and Josiah Allen as they journey outside Samantha's rural hometown, which was similar to Holley's own. Holley herself spent most of her life close to her family's farm; aside from Saratoga and Coney Island, she never actually visited the places to which she sent her fictional protagonists; she instead depended on maps, guidebooks, and descriptions for the necessary details.

FRESH FLOWERS



© John Holley

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

By William Wordsworth

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay.
In such a jocund company:
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood.
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.